

# Luke in his words...



**On 20th January 2016 I was admitted into Howard House detox centre in Oxford. It was the start of my road to recovery to address my long term addiction to drugs.**

From my early teens I experimented with drugs as part of fitting in with the friends on my estate, as part of the nightclub scene, and to give me self confidence.

Little did I realise that 17 years later I would be walking through the door of a detox centre, before moving onto a rehabilitation centre.

I could never ever imagine that the use of cannabis and party drugs, would one day have lead to me using crack cocaine and eventually heroin. I come from a good family, I had a good upbringing and I had a lot of love in my life. I didn't have any reason to use drugs, but ended up doing exactly that. I used drugs for 17 years of my life.

I tried to manage my drug use by swapping my drugs of choice, by cutting down my usage and by going on substitute prescribing. All of which never seemed to work for me, no matter how hard I tried. I lost my self respect, my family, my relationship with my partner and my daughter, who is now 17. My health wasn't in good shape and my passion for life was sinking fast. I just did not know how to get clean.

Then one day I had a chance meeting with a friend who suggested I went to Turning Point in Oxford, as he had managed to get his life back on track with their help.

So, I went there and before I knew it I was attended groups, I had people listening to me, and giving me the chance to get funding to go into treatment. For the first time in years I had hope and I felt so fortunate and grateful that I had been given a chance to get off drugs, and learn coping strategies to live a life free of addiction.

I went for an assessment to Gloucester House and from the moment I walked

through the door I knew I would be ok. I felt at peace, I felt safety and I felt hope.

I couldn't wait to get started on my therapy. I learnt about the illness of addiction, I learnt about me and how I tick, and I learnt skills I needed to sustain my recovery. As a builder I know that the right tools are needed to do the right job, and that is the same for recovery.

I had six months at Gloucester House learning the Step programme, searching my soul and sharing my story with others. It was the best decision I have ever made, because they gave me back my life, my self respect and my happiness.

Today I volunteer for two days a week at Gloucester House, as well as volunteering in the Salvation Army charity shop in Bicester one day a week. I now mentor other clients to go through the journey I went through, and in doing so I am keeping my recovery strong.

I have my daughter back in my life, I have made amends with my family, I help my dad who is not in the best of health, and I regularly spend time with my auntie, my sister and my brother. I have my own car, I enjoy being active and I am training for a triathlon, and I will always continue to be a part of the 12 Step fellowships.

I feel like a productive member of society today that can help others in their journey of recovery, and for that I am forever grateful.

Today I thank God for the many gifts I have been given, for the people that have been there for me showing me love, compassion and care.

Gloucester House is a truly amazing place that has literally loved me back to life.

***Forever grateful, Luke***

## Then...

*"I lost my self respect, my family, my relationship with my partner and my daughter... My health wasn't in good shape and my passion for life was sinking fast."*

## ...and now

*"I have my daughter back in my life, I have made amends with my family..."*

*I feel like a productive member of society that can help others in their journey of recovery..."*